

I obeyed, and fifteen minutes later we were skimming lightly and silently over the harbor towards the mole.

"You must have a disguise," she said, as we landed on the beach.

"What for, senora?"

"To conceal your nation, and ensure success. We have an arduous journey before us, and a still more arduous task in which we must not risk failure. Can you ride?"

"Like a dragoon."

"Throw the lasso?"

"Pardon me, senora, I know nothing about the article."

"A pity. Perfect command of the lasso would render a guerilla's garb most appropriate to you; but in it you must venture."

"Whither? Please favor me with some explanation, senora?"

"To the Minas Geraes."

"The diamond mines!" I echoed, and at that moment we turned a corner full in the face of the night patrols, who brought us to a dead halt.

With a woman's ready tact my companion misled them regarding our identity and purpose, when we were free to pass, they said, and we hurried on towards the suburbs, ere gaining which my companion halted at an humble dwelling, and thundering at the door, which was speedily opened by a withered old crone, bade me enter.

The latter seemed to recognize my companion, and inclined to load her with questions; but the latter silenced her with a brief explanation, when I was provided with a complete guerilla costume, which I was conducted to a chamber to assume, and when I returned to my companion, I found her arrayed in similar garb, and conferring with two stalwart sons of the lasso.

"My foster-brothers, senor," she said, as each of the strangers nodded me a welcome. "They are faithful, though rough in exterior—would die for me, and will prove our main stay in the execution of our enterprise. They are ready."

"More than I can say, yet I am at your service when you will, senora," said I, unable to repress a smile at the odd, brigandish figure I presented in an adjacent mirror.

Horses had been mysteriously provided during our brief delay, and mounting them at the door, we were soon on the Villa Rica road, and proceeding at a brisk canter towards the Paraíba River, which we forded at eight o'clock next morning, having ridden our steeds nearly fifty miles in a little less than five hours.

Resting for an hour on the northern bank, we resumed our journey, and within an hour reached

an hacienda, where our guides exchanged our jaded steeds for fresh animals, which bore us rapidly through the rich region of the upper Rio Grande until late in the afternoon, where we halted for refreshments at a wayside cafe, the keeper of which hailed our rough companions as old acquaintances.

From him we learned that a party of guards had passed the previous day, having in charge a state prisoner, and accompanied by the worthy Fra Luca, he said, whom he was rejoiced to see at home again. He did not notice my young companion's start, though he replied to her demand:

"What was the prisoner like?"

"A handsome caballero, senor. Santa Iago send him a speedy release from the Minas Geraes! I wouldn't minded throttling one or two of his guards to help him to his liberty, only they were good Catholics and he a heretic."

"An excellent reason for avoiding a compulsory visit to the mines yourself, Fillipo," remarked one of our guides; adding, "But hasten those horses and our wine, *mestre mio*, we must reach Villa Rica ere another dawn."

"Santa Maria! you are not wont to travel in such haste, good Henrique. Ha, more guards, and in hot haste—a dozen or more topping the hill yonder. Are they in chase of you?" And the burly host chuckled, while our intrepid leader bounded to the door, and hazarding a single glance to the advancing party, exclaimed:

"To your saddles, we are pursued! Fair and softly, though, their steeds are blown, and we must not direct their suspicion by apparent haste. Wait till behind the crown of yonder hill, and then—"

Her fresh, high-mettled steed reared at the instant, curtailing the sentence, when, tossing her purse to our host, she administered the spur, and cantering on in advance a few rods, reined her horse down to a walk until we joined her, when all proceeded at a gentle trot. But the movements of the soldiers soon convinced us that we were their object, for urging their jaded horses past the hotelrie, they came thundering on, when we dashed into a brisk gallop and soon distanced them.

We halted that night at a small village termed San Blas, on the eastern entrance of one of the dismal passes leading to the interior of that God-forsaken region, and having partaken of a—for the place and season—plentiful repast, retired to be aroused at midnight, at least I was, by a gentle touch of cold steel, and bounding from my pallet, found myself in the grasp of a stalwart guerilla.

Fearing the worst, I soon learned it—I was a prisoner to the party we had seen a few hours previous, and who had been sent out in search of us. But the mystery of their success in tracking us, remained unexplained for the time. My companions, I soon learned, had effected their escape, and while a portion of the band started in pursuit, I was dragged before the officer in command, and closely interrogated regarding the object of my disguise and presence at such a distance from Rio. I was dumb, but silence availed me little, and within the hour I was fully convinced that my prospects for mining life were more than flattering.

At dawn the pursuing party returned, and after a lengthy debate upon the surest measure to adopt for their capture, my captors set out, conveying me in their midst, bound, into captivity. We passed the barrier at four that afternoon, and at early twilight halted at a receiving station, where I was handed over to the intendant of the district, who welcomed me with mock urbanity, and calling an under-overseer, ordered him to conduct me to the quarters assigned to the other prisoner. Ten minutes later Wilfred Harper and myself were strained in a mutual embrace.

"Good Heavens, Frank, I did not dream that we were to meet in these infernal regions! What does it mean?" said he.

"That I was just soft enough to pledge myself to the task of rescuing you, as you did that siren, and we are rewarded."

"But you did not attempt it alone?"

"I wasn't quite fool enough." And adding an explanation, I could not withhold a smile as he bounded from the earthen floor, exclaiming:

"You don't say so? By Jove, she has repaid me tenfold! If I could only see her angelic face once more, I'd be content to pick diamonds for a lifetime."

"Look up and be gratified, *mio* Wilfredo! Hist!" And a moment later the speaker was locked in my friend's embrace.

"Imilda *mio*, how came you here?"

"Easily. As the daughter of *le alguazil* I passed the barrier. When did you reach the mines?"

"At noon."

"And at midnight you must leave them. Hist, the guard comes, to remove or separate you, perhaps. But fear nothing, when morning dawns, we will be beyond their reach." And with the word she vanished by a narrow aperture in the rear, as a patrol of two entered by the proper entrance.

Her last surmise was correct. They came to separate us, and I was conveyed to a distant hut,

which, I was informed, was to be my home for the present. Exhausted with my recent exertions, I cast myself on the damp earth, and was soon in deep slumber, from which I was aroused some time after midnight by a violent shake, which brought me to my feet in an instant of time.

"At last, Caraho! I thought you were in a trance, *senor*, so hard to rouse. Henrique, the *senorita* and *capitaneos* are off this hour. Come, we have no time to lose if we would escape the morning patrol."

And creeping stealthily from the hut he led me to a thicket near, into and through the mazes of which he wound his way, apparently heedless of the briars and Turk's heads which wounded me at every step, until the pain reached an agony, which rendered silence itself painful; but the struggle was for freedom, and I endured the laceration until we emerged at the base of an arid, rugged mountain, where were two horses, which we mounted, and urged along a winding mule path for a mile or more, when we opened into a narrow pass, into which my guide dashed, saying:

"Now, *senor*, a tight rein and sure stirrup-hold, and we're safe."

I obeyed the caution for an hour, or more, during which we had proceeded at varied speed, as the sure-footed horses found expedient, when we emerged on the opposite side of the mountain, and plunged into a deep valley, where a sluggish stream was forded, when our route again became ascending, but amid different scenes. The night winds fanned our faces through heavy foliage, and the delicious odor of tropical fruits and flowers saluted our olfactories on all sides. We had passed the barrier, and though still within the territory of Minas Geraes, had left the region of the condemned behind us. Still on we sped, maintaining unbroken silence for near another hour, when the first gray streak of dawn greeted our vision, and dashing into a dark avenue, my guide led me to a low-roofed, but ample mansion, the dim outline of which was lost in a forest of flowers and foliage.

"We stop here, *senor*," said my guide, leaping from his steed and assisting me to alight, which I did with difficulty for my form had stiffened in saddle posture.

"And where are we, *Buen Pietro*?"

"In secure anchorage, Frank," exclaimed my commander, bounding from the piazza. "I had given you up, but thank Heaven, you're safe!"

"But where?" I persisted, as I returned his friendly grasp. "This is a paradise."

"Nay, *Senor Francisco*," said the beauteous Imilda, appearing once more in the proper habil-

iments of her sex, "'tis only the hacienda de Ribelass."

"'Tis as Frank says, heaven, and you its reigning divinity," murmured the enraptured lover, as he gave to each an arm, and led us into a dimly lighted hall, in which was spread an inviting repast, of which I partook plentifully, while gathering a detail of my friend's adventures of the night. A sketch of my own was briefly given, when my wounds were dressed, and ere the sun showed his disc over the eastern mountain's top we were in dreamland, encountering all our recent peril over again. Day had far advanced when Captain Harper aroused me.

"Well, what now?" I grumbled. "Do you never sleep any? If your bones were as sore—"

"O, nonsense, you can stand it long enough to lend a hand at making a long splice, so up with you!"

"A long splice! What do you mean? We aint at sea, nor aboard the Annie."

"No, but we are in the hacienda de Ribelass, and I'm to be married to its mistress."

"Married, the deuce!" I was out of bed in an instant.

"That's it. The parson and bridesmaids are waiting." And then, as I assumed my guerilla garb again, he briefly told me of the senora's uncle, the Fra Eusebio, who was a sworn enemy to Don Carlos de Soto, and had arrived at the hacienda that morning, already aware of his niece's flight from Rio, and overjoyed to find her where least expected, had won the history of her love, and sought her lover to learn his desires, and tell him if he would he might be happy.

We sought the little chapel attached to the mansion, where Wilfred Harper falsified his vows to the fair Annie Herbert, and became the husband of a Spanish bride; but having learned how well they loved, I could not blame him, and so performed my part without the utterance of reproach.

Three days later I entered Rio, and made my way to the mole, where I signalled the barque for a boat; but none came, when, after waiting an hour, I went off in a shore boat, to find a Brazilian official in possession, and all intercourse with the shore prohibited. 'Twas only by dint of much persuasion, and an ample bribe, I could obtain permission to board, when I coolly rejected his suggestion that I should return ashore again. He begged, prayed, coaxed and threatened, until, convinced that a Yankee mate was not to be frightened he desisted, while I wrote a hasty note to our consul, stating facts, and begging his interposition to prevent my arrest and return to the mines, of which I had cause to fear.

But ere it reached him, all Rio was thrown into consternation by the assassination of his excellency, Don Carlos de Soto, who was stabbed to the heart on the plaza in the presence of scores of pleasure-seeking Janeiroans, at vesper hour. The assassin was seized on the spot, and proved to be a political enemy of the government, which had condemned him to the mines, from which he had escaped to execute his revenge.

This unexpected event turned the scale in our favor, and when Captain Harper and his happy bride reached the city three days later, the former was courteously though coldly received by the alguazil, who refrained from any comments at the time, being probably too deeply grieved at his late friend's fate, and exercised regarding the manner in which his vast fortune was disposed of. But that riddle was read ere the week was out, when Captain Harper paid me a visit on board the Annie, exclaiming, as he wrung my hand:

"Congratulate me, Frank, old messmate!"

"Why, what the deuce has happened now? I thought you couldn't well find room for more."

"So did I. But there, I'm just the luckiest dog alive."

"Has old De Ribelass relented in full?"

"Ay, and more—"

"Made a will in your wife's favor, then?"

"No; but old De Soto did. Left her his whole fortune, bless his old bones! I can afford to forgive him for his unblessed love, since to him I owe the richest as well as the loveliest bride in all Brazil."

"Whew! Then I may shift my quarters at once?" said I, jocund at his good fortune.

"Ay, and comfort Annie Herbert, if you will, when you get home. I'd take it as a favor, Frank."

"Thank you. 'What man in his senses could wed her, after enjoying the society of the angelic senora?' You forget I made a trip to the mines with her."

"O, fudge! I'm not jesting."

"Nor I, only quoting from your text-book. But I may think the matter over, and propose when I reach home. 'Queen sabe.'"

Scarcely a day passed while the barque remained in Rio, that I did not spend a portion of it in the society of my friend and his beauteous bride, to whom I laughingly sketched her husband's inconstancy in his presence one day, when with a saddened countenance she demanded:

"Did she love him, senor, think you?"

"Too late I saw my error, when I endeavored to heal the wound by responding:

"Only a little, senora."

"Only a little. Then 'twas but just that she

should lose him, and to me, for I—" The fervent kiss she pressed upon his lips was a most appropriate closing for her sentence.

She did indeed love him much, and when we met to say *addio*, charged me with rare, rich presents for the forsaken maid, "Some return for the lover she had lost." They were worth a little fortune, and received by Annie Herbert with smiles, undimmed by tears. It must have been their intrinsic value that increased her self-esteem, and steeled her heart against all my advances, averting my intended (?) proposal, and rendered her an object of interest to a Mr. C—, who wooed and won her, barque and all.

Wilfred Harper remained in Brazil; but still remained American, serving our government for a term of years as resident consul, nor, so far as I have learned, has he ever regretted his trip to the diamond mines, and the issue of his last love adventure.

NAGASAKI.

Nagasaki, in that part of the world where centuries are counted small fractions in the lapse of time, is a modern city. The city lies along the water's edge, and spreads upwards between and among the hills—broad, steep hills—from a thousand to eighteen hundred feet high, sparsely wooded, but green to their tops, and strewn with stone and shapeless masses of calcareous rock. The greater part of the city lies in an ascending valley, between two hills, spreading on either hand some distance up the hillsides. Three considerable rivers issue out of the hill gorges, and disembogue themselves into the bay. The rivers, swelled to an unusual volume by the long rains, were roaring over their rocky beds, whipped into creamy foam. A few rude flouring mills were driven by the swift-flowing torrent. The dams were a few boulders, tumbled into the stream, enough to divert a stream of water through a wooden sluice against a breast shot-wheel. It was the first mechanical application of water-power I had seen in Japan. Each mill had a single run of small stones, driven by the simplest arrangement of cogs. The bolting was done by two sieves, one of which was moved by water and the other by the miller's hands, and to which the flour was carried by hand in wooden buckets. The quality of the flour was fair, making a dark but sweet bread. The streets of Nagasaki have the convenient width and cleanliness of the approved Japanese pattern, and are bordered by the usual neat cottages of one and two stories, the quiet shops, and strong fire-proof warehouses, with hard-finished white walls and overhanging roofs of dark and white tiles. Many of the streets are long handsome avenues, of two and two and a half rods wide, with a smooth, well-beaten and ever cleanly-swept roadway, in the centre of which is a stone pavement of a few feet in width. Japanese *side-walks* are always in the centre of the street. The situation of the city assists to good drainage, and everywhere pure water from the hills was flowing down the stone channels of the street gutters, imparting to the whole city a refreshing cleanliness and salubrity. The hills are so steep that houses and temples are ranged in tiers, one above the other, like the seats of a theatre. The floor of one house is on a level with the roof of its next lower neighbor, so that one might sit on his own garden-wall and look down into his neighbor's smoke aperture to inspect the family cooking.—*Correspondent of the Tribune.*

[ORIGINAL.]

THE DOOMED BARONET:

—OR,—

JANE MORTIMER'S REVENGE.

BY DR. C. L. FENTON.

PARIS is a very pleasant, gay and fascinating city. The man who has plenty of cash to spare may find abundant opportunities of spending it, even though he possess the purse of Fortunatus, and let his temperament be what it may, need never lack amusement, while he who has but little money to spare, may—when he has once learned the way—live more comfortably and enjoy more pleasure with a little money than he can in any other great city in the world; but with all its attractions, Paris is a very slippery place. We speak plainly; we do not allude to the temptations which may lead the weak or unwary to slip from the paths of virtue and morality; but we mean downright slipperiness. With all its boasted advantages, Paris possesses one of the most wretched climates in the world. It is

the light, airy construction of the better portions of the city, and the easy, cheerful, perhaps frivolous character of the better class of the population, the gaiety of the shops, the variety of amusements, etc., which constitute its charms, otherwise its climate is infinitely worse than that of its great rival city, London. The latter city is sombre on account of the, often ungainly, substantiality of its buildings, and from the dense atmosphere created by the coal smoke; but it has not the burning heat of Paris in summer, nor the chill, damp frosts of Paris in winter, and, taking into account the vastly greater number of pedestrians that crowd the streets of London, compared with those of Paris, London streets are certainly more cleanly, or were at least, under the Bourbon and Orleans *regimes*, and it then required the skill and firm tread of a posture-master to perambulate the streets of Paris after a fall of sleet or snow in the winter season without falling half a dozen times in an hour's walk. But why should I complain? It is to the slipperiness of the streets of Paris that I am indebted for a wife. Perhaps, but for the lucky chance which enabled me to save a lady from measuring her length in a puddle of muddy, half-melted snow, I should still be in a state of single blessedness.

Everybody knows that Paris is world-famed for its medical schools. It is as essential to the good fame of a physician that he should be enabled to boast of having finished his studies in Paris, as for an artist to spend a few years in Rome and Florence; so, after I had quitted college, and received my diploma, commissioning me to write myself M. D., and to kill or cure, as the case might be, with due authority, it was considered by my friends that I could not expend the few hundred dollars which came into my possession on coming of age to better advantage than by passing through a course of instruction at a French medical college, and "walking the hospitals" of Paris.

"It will be such an opening for you," said one friend.

"It sounds so well," said another, "Doctor S—, graduate of the Esculapian College, of Paris!" And nothing loth to a short sojourn in the gay city of which I had heard and read so much, I packed up my carpet bag, and started for Europe forthwith.

I had been domiciled six months in Paris. It was winter time—one of those charming mornings which may be called *par excellence* Paris's own. Without actually raining, or snowing, or freezing, the atmosphere was sufficiently heavy to keep down one's more cheerful feelings far be-

low zero, and though the fog that might have prevailed in London on such a morning was lacking, the pavement offered no resting place for the soles of my feet, and the ludicrously earnest looks of those I met, who were sprawling about like shell-shod cats, testified to the difficulty of advancing. I wended on my way to the hospitals, however, with many internal excretions, until I found myself immediately behind a lady whose figure displayed peculiar grace, and the spirit, demon, if you will, of curiosity, suggested that it would be desirable to obtain a view of her face.

You will meet almost as many foreigners as French women in Paris, that is to say, on the boulevards and principal streets, and so far as grace of figure and poetry of motion are concerned, the French women yield to none on the face of the earth, except the females of the south of Spain; but—we presume there are few French people among our readers—at all events, as impartial chroniclers, we must write, few of the French women are beautiful in feature. They are surpassed in that respect by every continental nation—far surpassed by their English island neighbors, and by the American. You may safely presume, if you meet a very beautiful woman in the boulevards of Paris, that in nine instances out of ten, she is English or American, and if young, under twenty, and classical in her style of beauty, that she is American. I pushed forward, when suddenly the lady placed her foot upon a more lubricated spot than common, slipped, and I do not know precisely what she might have broken, had I not interposed to save her, received her in my arms, broken my watch-glass, and lost my heart.

I thought her the most lovely creature I had ever seen—remember, I was but twenty three years old—and as I replaced her on her feet, for which courtesy she thanked me in delightful English-French, I thought I could do no less than offer my escort to her home, as the streets were so very slippery. It was accepted. What we said to one another on the way can concern nobody, and as the lady is now my wife, the disclosure would be particularly impertinent. It is sufficient to say that she informed me she was an Englishwoman; that she resided at the Hotel Montmorenci, and that her guardian, with whom she was travelling, was Sir Edward D—. In fact he—Sir Edward—had been to Florence, at which city she had been finishing her education, and they were now on their way to England.

As I left her at the door of the hotel, she placed a card in my hand. It was inscribed "Miss Emily Seymour," and a second card, which she

also handed to me bore the name of "Sir Edward D—, Baronet, Hoxley Manor, Cumberland." In pencil beneath the name was written "Montmorenci Hotel, Paris."

"Ah," I muttered, as I walked away, "an orphan, and the ward of a baronet. Wealthy of course, perhaps nobly, at all events, aristocratically connected."

Rather high game for a Yankee medical student to aim at. But when did young love stop to calculate chances? Especially when the lover was a Yankee. Does not our republicanism render us the equals of any aristocracy on earth? Are we not all sovereigns? Did not Miss Patterson wed the brother of an emperor? A parvenu emperor, to be sure; but, then, more than one American lady wears a coronet on her brow, and graces the saloons of the English and French aristocracy, with a countess's title prefixed to her name. Why should not the tables be turned? Why should not an American sovereign wed a titled English lady? Perhaps, after all, the lady might not be of such lofty lineage. At all events she was young and beautiful, and at that period youth and beauty were, with me, charms paramount to wealth, or all the titles of a Spanish donna.

My profession—I had told her I was a physician—gave me the right to call and inquire whether she had received any internal injury from her fall. Indeed, I fancied she looked as if she expected I would call, when she bade me goodbye. If she had been a French woman, she would have said at once, *au revoir* (till our next meeting). But those English are so formal.

I did call, and the garcon, after I had sent up my card, requested me to walk up stairs, telling me that, *le sieur Edouard* would be glad to see me in his rooms. I ascended the stairs and was conducted to the rooms by the garcon, who left me at the door.

Sir Edward rose, on my entrance, and expressed his particular obligations for the service I had rendered his ward, and requesting me to be seated, entered into conversation upon the general topics of the day. He did not appear, to be more than thirty-five years of age, and yet I was puzzled to account for the deepened furrows on his brow, and the somewhat haggard, careworn aspect of a man of his position; for the evening before I had hunted the booksellers' shops for an "English Baronetage," and had learned from the book that Sir Edward D— was born in 18—, and was just thirty-five years old, and that he had succeeded to the title and estate—the latter yielding a rent-roll of £12,000 per annum—on the death of his elder brother; and I thought a

young baronet, with twelve thousand pounds a year, certainly ought to be free from the troubles and anxieties which imprint their mark on the visages of less-favored mortals.

He was, however, a finely-formed man, of commanding presence, and of noble figure, with a piercing black eye, which lit up a countenance, which might have been justly termed handsome but for the haggard, thoughtful, clouded expression I have referred to. After a short time, Miss Emily came into the room, and entered into conversation with us, after having repeated the thanks of the previous evening.

I enjoyed a very pleasant visit; both Sir Edward and the young lady appeared to feel great interest in America. The former was a member of the British parliament, and was then getting up a variety of statistical facts relative to the United States, and I presume he fancied I could be of service to him. When I rose to depart, he expressed a hope that the acquaintance thus commenced would continue, and I fancied the glance of the young lady said the same words. I bowed, and said I should be most happy. Sir Edward invited me to dine with him on the following day, and I left, much gratified with my visit, and if I had been stricken the day before, I was now over head and ears in love with Emily.

Sir Edward and his ward remained in Paris about a month, and when they left for England, the baronet expressed a hope that before I returned to New York I would visit England, and make either his town house, or his country seat, Hoxley Manor, my home.

Of course I visited England after this; indeed, I did what otherwise I should not have thought of—I entered into an engagement with a London physician to attend a course of study at St. Thomas's Hospital in that city, so that I might have an excuse to prolong my residence in England, *ad libitum*, of course taking private lodgings in London.

Within six weeks after the baronet's departure, I was in London. The House of Commons was then in session, and Sir Edward and Miss Emily were residing at the town mansion of the former, in St. James Street. Both were glad to see me, and notwithstanding the difference in our social position, I was soon on terms of intimacy with them, and through them with several of the nobility and landed gentry, who visited at the baronet's house.

Sir Edward had taken such a fancy to me that he urged me to commence the practice of medicine in London, promising me his influence, and I thought it an excellent opportunity for a young beginner, especially as in that case I should re-

main near Miss Seymour. I will spare my readers my love story—such things are commonplace—it is sufficient to say that Miss Emily was a young lady of good family, and though not an heiress, in the usual acceptance of the term, would become, when she reached the age of twenty-one, the possessor of a snug little fortune of £8000, in her own right—\$40,000—a very pretty help to a young medical student, without money, just beginning in the world! We had been much together, perfectly understood each other, and it was settled that she would become of age and my wife on the same day, with her guardian's free consent.

I will pass over the twelve months that intervened between our engagement and this happy period, merely stating that I had taken lodgings in a first-class boarding-house near St. James's Street, in conjunction with a young but already rising barrister, with whom I had formed an intimate acquaintance, and of whose character and abilities I had formed the highest opinion.

Sir Edward used frequently to drop in upon us either on his way to or return from the House, and sit and chat for an hour before he returned home, if in the latter case, for he was a bachelor, and time often hung heavily on his hands. One evening he was announced as usual. A newspaper was laying on the table, which he took up carelessly, remarking:

"Any news to-day, Mr. —? What do they say of the debate last night?"

He glanced hurriedly along the columns, when something arrested his gaze. He appeared much agitated, rose and went to the window, and read and re read the paragraph, passing his hand once or twice over his brow, as if to assure himself of its reality. The next moment he threw down the journal, and taking up his hat, wished me a hasty farewell—my companion was not at home—and said as he was leaving the room:

"You may not see me again for some time. I must be off to the continent immediately."

The next moment he had quitted the house. I took up the paper to endeavor to discover the paragraph which had evidently so disconcerted him; the mark of his thumb nail had been violently impressed against the following lines, an extract from a French journal:

"The body of the English gentleman, Mr. Davis, who disappeared so mysteriously about a month ago, has been found by some fishermen, in the lake of Como. It is supposed that unfortunate gentleman had been bathing, and had ventured beyond his depth. The body was only identified in consequence of his name being on some shreds of clothing, supposed to have been a portion of his bathing-dress."

Of course it was all a mystery to me; but the next day I called upon Miss Seymour. She could give me no further information than that her guardian had returned home, as she supposed, from the House, in a state of great mental distress, and hurriedly bidding her good-by, had said he was going to his banker's, and thence to the continent, immediately adding that he might be absent for some months.

"It was no business of mine; but people will busy themselves about others, and all day long I could not get Sir Edward and his hasty departure out of my head. Towards evening further thought was put an end to by a short note, which disconcerted me fully as much as the newspaper paragraph had disconcerted the baronet. It merely said:

"Newgate Prison, Tuesday, P. M.

"MY DEAR FELLOW:—Come to me immediately. Speak a word to no one.

"D—."

I started immediately for the prison, and was admitted into a dark, ill-furnished, but private apartment, which the baronet's rank, and probably his purse, had procured for him. Sir Edward was seated at a small table, scoring figures in the dust which had accumulated upon it, probably for months. He started nervously when I was announced, but rose to receive me with as much cordiality as I had ever seen in his drawing-room at St. James Street.

"Ah, this is kind, B—," he said. "You did not expect to visit me here when we parted yesterday?"

"Indeed, Sir Edward, I did not," I replied. "What, in Heaven's name, can this mean?"

"For what do you suppose I am arrested?"

"I am totally at a loss to conjecture. This is not a debtor's prison."

"No, thank God, I am not in debt. I am arrested on a charge of murder."

"Good God!" I exclaimed. "Of whom—what—where—you are joking?"

"Not I; it is no matter for mirth."

"But—you are—are—"

"Innocent, you would say," said the baronet, sternly. "Have you a doubt of that?"

"I?"

"Still," he continued, "something must be done, and to enable you to understand the case, I must unravel more of my history than I usually care to dwell upon. I had rather that you, as a friend, would act for me just now than to apply to a lawyer. Pray sit down."

Perfectly astounded, I took my seat, and the baronet, with an unbroken calmness of voice, related the following incidents:

"You must know that about two years ago, I accompanied my brother, Sir William D—, on a tour through Italy and Switzerland. William was very much older than I, and consequently had got over the follies of youth, and even before we left England, some trifling differences arose between us. I insisted upon taking my page with me—he objected; but at length gave his consent, until he reached Paris, when we quarrelled again, for I must tell you my page was a female, one Jane Mortimer, and my brother, who prided himself on his moral habits, was shocked, and expressed himself strongly against what he termed my dereliction from the paths of duty, and so forth. I confess I was to blame; but," he sighed, "I was ten years younger, two years ago, than I am now.

"However, the alternative he offered me was to dismiss the girl, or part company with him. His estates were not entailed, and he threatened to make a will to deprive me of the property, if he could not deprive me of the title, at his death. I am not fond of dictation, and I answered him in his own way. We both spoke pretty loud, and it appears that our conversation was overheard—"

"May I inquire," I asked, "whether your feelings towards the girl were interested?"

"My pride was," he replied, "nothing else. I was tired of the girl, and would have gladly got rid of her; but she forced herself upon me, and under the circumstances, I would not be dictated to. My brother worked himself into a furious passion, took a hasty supper, drank more than he was in the habit of doing, and retired to bed early. During the night he died of apoplexy."

"His death was very sudden," I observed.

"Death from apoplexy always is sudden," replied the baronet, looking me steadily in the face. "Of course," he continued, "I took the necessary steps for proving his death. He was your little friend Emily's guardian; that charge I took upon myself, and in doing this, of course it became imperative upon me to get rid of Jane Mortimer, which I was by no means sorry to do. I therefore pensioned her off, after tears and threats and protestations on her part too numerous to mention, with the assistance of an English gentleman, named Davis, who has lately died, who promised to take care of her."

"Davis," I exclaimed, my thoughts reverting to the newspaper paragraph, "pray, Sir Edward, what caused you to be so much disconcerted when you read the account of Mr. Davis's death?"

"Sir," exclaimed the baronet, "I am not accustomed to be cross-questioned. Pooh! this

affair has made me nervous. Excuse me—he was an old friend, and the news of his death startled me a good deal; but, pray how did you discover the paragraph which caused me such emotion?"

"You marked it with your nail, Sir Edward," I replied.

"Did I? Strange! But I must tell you. I was on the eve of starting for Italy, *via* Calais, in order to be present at poor Davis's funeral, when I was arrested—you will hardly credit it—and accused of the murder of my own brother!"

"Of Sir William!" I exclaimed. The news came upon me like a thunder-stroke. I had almost anticipated hearing that Sir Edward had been suspected of the removal of his late mistress, perhaps by violence; but for what he told me, I was quite unprepared.

"Ay," he replied, savagely, "and the charge has been made by that viper, Jane Mortimer, the base, ungrateful creature! Why, I cannot conceive, nor what she can dream of adducing by way of proof. However, we must do something, and I have sent for you, because I like that young fellow who lives with you, and would have him retained in my case. Of course he must have an older counsel with him, and I must beg of you to see my lawyer and get him to send a retainer to Henry Brougham. I know of no abler man, and your young friend will work admirably with him."

(Of course this tale has relation to a period prior to the elevation of Henry Brougham to the bench, and to the peerage under his now well-known title of Lord Brougham and Vaux. At the period of which I write, he was the most eminent counsel at the bar, and was making by his profession, at least fifteen thousand pounds per annum. It was not his practice to accept retainers in criminal cases, at this period of his career, though like most barristers, it was through his skill in defending them that he acquired his fame; but in consideration of Sir Edward's rank and position, he accepted the retainer, in his case.)

After some further conversation, I quitted the prison, and early in the morning I called at the office of the baronet's lawyer, who went with me to the magistrate who had committed him, and obtained a copy of the depositions, which he showed me. They were explicit and direct, charging Sir Edward with the murder of his brother, by poison, at the Hotel de Lisle, Rue des Cranbougues, Paris, and were signed by one Jane Mortimer.

I could not, withal, believe the baronet guilty. I believed the girl to be actuated by revenge. I

brought a copy to the jail, and showed it to Sir Edward.

"What think you of it?" I asked, when he had read it.

"It is clear and straightforward," was the reply, "evidently the work of no novice."

I did not remain long with the baronet, and from that visit until the day of trial, I saw but little of him. He was much engaged with his lawyers and counsel. I had no doubt whatever of his innocence, for I concluded it was as he had intimated, a charge brought forward out of spite by his discarded mistress, which would be instantly disproved when the day of trial came. Indeed, I much doubted whether the witness would dare to appear against the prisoner, and I should here put it on record that Lord (then Mr. Henry) Brougham, before he would take the case in hand, had an interview with Sir Edward, and thus addressed him:

"Sir Edward D—, I will do whatever I can in this matter, and if it be as you suspect, I have no doubt whatever of proving the charge to be an infamous conspiracy; but I tell you further, I have long given over pleading in criminal courts, and if I had the slightest suspicion that this wretched woman's depositions were true, nay, if I even imagined—"

Sir Edward, as I learned from my friend, the junior counsel, interrupted the learned barrister, by saying, with much apparent emotion:

"Enough, my dear sir. I fully believe you, and but for my having such confidence in your belief in my integrity, I should not have dared to apply to you, nor could I have expected such a favor as I feel this to be, at your hands. No person that knows me can for a moment suspect me guilty of crime, much less of such a crime."

The baronet took Mr. Brougham's hand, and turned aside his head. The junior counsel thought he wept.

On the evening before the day of the trial, I saw Sir Edward for a few moments, and was much assured by the calm tone in which he spoke, and criticized the points of the case. He asked feelingly after Miss Seymour, whom he would on no account permit to visit him in jail, and said that, confident as he was of acquittal, he should only remain to see us married, and then quit England forever, and take up his abode on the continent. He shook hands with me at parting, and particularly requested that I would attend the trial.

The court-room was crowded to excess. Many ladies and gentlemen of rank and station obtained seats on the bench, and spectators squeezed themselves into every available place.

The rank and position of the prisoner charged with such a shocking crime, in such a singular manner, had naturally caused an intense excitement throughout the country, and even abroad.

After the usual formalities, Sir Edward was placed at the bar. His step was firm, and his whole demeanor betrayed confidence of acquittal. The crown counsel commenced his speech with professions of grief at the painful duty on his hands, and after an able harangue of two hours' duration, called Jane Mortimer.

A very beautiful young woman appeared in the witness box, whose charms, though somewhat faded, showed what she must have been in extreme youth, and what she would be even until advanced age. Her evidence did not differ from her depositions. So clearly did she tell her story that the opposite advocate, with much address, abstained from asking her questions, and the interest in court was intense as she turned to Sir Edward, who was leaning with much composure against the side of the box, and with sparkling eyes, and finger pointed at the accused, exclaimed:

"Sir Edward D—, you, who with the false oaths and vows you determined to break, even while you were uttering them, enticed me from a mother's roof to ruin and ignominy—who caused the transportation of my only brother for only questioning your treatment of his sister—who, weary of your victim when she had lost the power to amuse you, cast me off upon one of your libertine associates in payment of a gambling debt—who again endeavored to get rid of me by more violent means in the streets of Boulogne—who allowed the pension fear had wrung from you to be discontinued, little dreaming that I should escape starvation to impeach you here—you, Sir Edward D—, are now before a tribunal of your own country for murder—for the murder of a brother—for a murder you dare not deny. The poison you destroyed him with you obtained long before that night—you carried it about you concealed in the hollow of a pencil case, and on the evening of your last quarrel with your brother, you drew that pencil from your pocket, on pretence of sending a note for me; and as he turned his head, you threw the poison into his glass. I knew what would be the result of Sir William's discovery of my sex. I was watching you. Deny it if you dare."

A half-suppressed laugh from Sir Edward followed this speech. It was instantly checked by a look from his leading counsel, who inquired whether the crown had any other evidence. The reply was in the negative, and Mr. Brougham proceeded to cross-examine Jane Mortimer.

She underwent a most searching and rigid inquiry without varying in a single particular, and after a fruitless attempt to confuse or disconcert her, the acute advocate sat down, and Sir Edward was called upon for his defence.

(The prisoner, in an English court of law, is not permitted to plead his own cause, but his written defence, well known to be got up under the best advice, is read for him by his advocate.)

Sir Edward D— handed a manuscript to the junior counsel, who read it aloud in a clear, distinct tone, throwing emphasis upon all the strong points. Sir Edward commented on the character of the witness, her long-delayed testimony, and on every other point that could be brought to bear against her, and concluded by an impassioned appeal to the hearts of those before whom he stood arraigned, much in the style which long practice had shown to be most effectual and availing with men, who, with all their differences, have been of the same blood and passions in every age.

The defence produced a decided impression in the prisoner's favor, and the judge was about to sum up, when the witness, Jane Mortimer, drew a small slip of paper from her bosom, on which a few pencilled lines appeared, and rushing to the witness box, exclaimed, in a scream of rage, rather than in a tone of ordinary speech, for the bitter sarcasms of the prisoner had not been lost on her:

"Will Sir Edward D—, deny this?"

The paper was handed to the court, and while the venerable judge was looking through it, both the counsel turned to the prisoner with looks of mortification and anger. Sir Edward D—'s lips quivered; he was deadly pale, and he leaned against the bar for support. He had recognized the paper!

"You have but half instructed us, Sir Edward," said the leading counsel, in a voice which, though low and confidential, was expressive of the deepest reproach and contempt.

"I had forgotten this—I—I—save—save me, gentlemen—I—" stammered the prisoner. "My fortune is yours—" He seemed to have become perfectly paralyzed by the new turn of affairs; but he speedily recollected and recovered himself, and rising to his full height, he said in a loud voice, "Let me see that paper? Forgery, no doubt, well worthy of the producer."

The paper was handed to him. He looked closely at every word, as if eager to detect and prove a forgery, and brought it nearer to his eyes to throw a better light upon it. Suddenly he made a rapid effort to thrust it into his mouth. I clasped my hands in agony. The

act was madness, and it was useless. A constable caught his hand, and rescued the paper.

Had the moment not arrived when, at one o'clock, under any circumstances, the court adjourns, while the judge retires to swallow a glass of wine and eat a biscuit, that paper and the act of the prisoner must have proved fatal to him. I could already read his sentence in the eyes of the jury-men.

What had the judge's adjournment to do with his acquittal or condemnation? We shall see. Though evidently deeply incensed at being deceived, the leading counsel was determined to do his duty to the prisoner, and perhaps was anxious to acquit him for his own fame's sake.

While the judge was absent, Mr. Brougham called the lawyer's clerk to him, a whispering conversation followed, which was closed by a louder order for the young man to make haste back with the letters. The court remained crowded. No one stirred but the bench and the clerk, who had lost his hat (!). He thought he must have placed it in the jury-box, and he entered and passed slowly through, passing leisurely each individual jurymen, and only found the missing hat at the far end of the box. When he had gone—he returned suspiciously soon—I noticed the jurymen whispering together, and glancing from one another towards the prisoner, and fancied that the gloomy expression of their features brightened.

The judge re-entered. He summed up the case, strongly against the prisoner; especially drawing the attention of the jury to the endeavor of the prisoner to destroy the strongest evidence against him; but concluded by cautioning them to give the prisoner the benefit of any doubt that might exist in their minds as to his guilt. In less than five minutes the foreman of the jury rose, and firmly pronounced the words:

"Not guilty!"

"Gentlemen, the verdict is yours, not mine," said the judge, in a tone of great astonishment.

Sir Edward bowed, and on leaving the dock, offered his hand to Mr. Brougham. It was declined: The counsel took not the slightest notice of him.

I walked home with the baronet, but not a word was exchanged on the way. He was, however, joyfully received by Emily, who had entertained no doubt of his innocence.

Sir Edward declared his intention of going down immediately to his country seat, and asked me to accompany him. As Emily was going, of course I consented. We went in the baronet's own travelling carriage, with post horses.

There was no delay on the road, after we had started, ten days after the verdict. What had become of Jane Mortimer, none of us knew—her name was never mentioned.

We had arrived at the last stage of the journey, and having stopped at an inn, Emily and I had alighted, while the horses were being put to the carriage, leaving the baronet in the vehicle.

When we came forth from the inn, I was surprised to see the baronet in earnest conversation with a slight-built young man, whose face I could not see. Observing us approach, the baronet ordered the lad to go away, and upon his seeming refusal, raised his hand as if to strike him. The next moment the report of a pistol was heard; the carriage was filled with smoke. I, with one of the hostlers, rushed forward, leaving Emily in the passage of the inn. When we reached the carriage, the boy had flown, he was nowhere to be seen; but the baronet lay dead, inside, shot right through the head!

I was greatly shocked, Emily fainted away, and it was some time before she was able to proceed on the journey. Another carriage was obtained, and in the hired carriage, Emily and I proceeded to Hoxley Manor, while the baronet's carriage conveyed his dead body to his ancestral seat.

The unhappy death of Sir Edward delayed our marriage for several months, and when, at length, the wedding took place, Emily expressed a wish to leave England, where, she said, she was continually reminded of the awful scene she had witnessed, and of the disgrace to which her guardian had been subjected; for she still believed he was innocent of the crime imputed to his charge, and that his murder was committed by one of those who had, as she believed, conspired to wrong and ruin him, and who had been balked of their purpose. It was agreeable, for I longed to see my native land again, and to settle there. We had made all preparation for our departure within twelve months of Sir Edward's decease.

About a week before we set sail, the distant relatives to whom Sir Edward's estates had descended—the baronetage became extinct at his decease—set a number of men to work to clear away the brushwood which had accumulated after several years' growth, in a plantation near the mansion at Hoxley Manor, which had formerly been a game preserve. In doing this they came across the dead body, greatly decomposed, of a human being in man's apparel, but upon examination, the corpse proved to be that of a female. A rusty pistol was found near the body, which was the counterpart of that with

which Sir Edward had been shot, which had been thrown away by the murderer, and picked up on the roadside.

One of the left ribs of the body was fractured, and no doubt existed among those who were acquainted with the melancholy tale I have told, that the murderer of the baronet was Jane Mortimer; that she had herself taken the revenge the laws of her country refused to give her, and had then retired to this desolate spot, and there with the remaining pistol, taken her own life, and found the sleep that knows no waking.

With respect to the agitation of the baronet on hearing of Mr. Davis's death, we imagine that this man, whoever he was, had some authority over Jane Mortimer—perhaps kept her in durance—and hearing of his decease, Sir Edward thought of averting the catastrophe which followed; but the unhappy girl was too quick for him, and had already taken measures to bring him to justice.

[ORIGINAL.]

THE CRIMSON CHAMBER.

BY MRS. M. F. MINOT.

"Ay, his doom is sealed! This night will I accomplish the deed ere the clock in yonder tower has struck the midnight hour!" And as she uttered these words, Isidore Montalbert rose from the sumptuous couch on which she had been reposing, and passing through the length of the lofty apartment—gloomy in spite of its luxurious furniture and rich ornaments—she paused at a high arched window, and fixed her keen glance on the clock of which she had spoken, and which was placed midway in a cumbrous tower that rose from a wing of the castle-like building that had now been her home for more than ten years.

She was a woman of strange, weird beauty. A rich bloom pervaded both cheek and lip, and her large dark eyes were as lustrous as the jewels clustered in the jetty braid twined above her forehead. Her dress of amber-colored silk fell in rich folds about her tall stately figure, and rare gems, like those that sparkled amid her raven hair, were twined about her fair throat and dimpled arms which were bare nearly to the shoulder, while floating over the whole, giving a new grace to her faultless form, was a delicate veil of costly black lace which swayed about her like a cloud-wreath as the soft winds of that southern clime, laden with fragrant odors, stole gently in.

She remained for some moments with her eyes fixed on the dial-plate of the old clock whose characters shone in the moonbeams as though of burnished gold.

"Half past eleven," she at length murmured; "I will proceed at once to break the tie that has bound me through these long, weary years. Ah, it was a lucky impulse that prompted me to buy that subtle poison of the Arabian wizard I chanced to meet during my travels in the East. Three drops upon the crown of his head and in a few moments his system will have absorbed the poison, and Hugh Montalbert will have ceased to be, while I shall be free and safe, for not a trace will remain to tell how he died." And with a grim smile she moved to the cabinet near and took a small golden phial from a secret drawer; then she glided rapidly away through gloomy corridors, stately halls, and long suits of gorgeous apartments, pausing at last on the threshold of a room known as the Crimson Chamber.

It was a peculiar looking place. The suggestions of a capricious fancy had there found embodiment. Light from an unseen source, though soft as the moonbeams, revealed every-

thing in the clearest outlines. The ponderous furniture was of crimson velvet and gilded mahogany richly carved. On the frescoed walls were hung alternately, stuffed birds and warlike implements both of ancient and modern times. Costly perfumes were exhaling from swinging censers of silver, and in the centre of the apartment was a fountain. Its basin was of red freestone supported by four lions rampant, and the murmuring of its waters, which rose in three slender jets, fell musically on the otherwise profound stillness. Midway between the fountain and the door stood a bed, a marvel of luxury, about which floated in clouds of crimson and gold a gossamer-like fabric pendent from a bunch of red coral attached to the ceiling.

Isadore Montalbert paused but for a moment, then passing quickly within she secured the door, and going to the bed drew aside the delicate drapery and bent over the sleeping occupant, prepared, should he awaken, to lavish on him her hollow caresses. But in spite of her fixed gaze, her husband—for such he was—continued bound by the heavy slumber that had locked his every sense.

The sleeper was a man of fifty and upwards, and his long black hair, streaked here and there with silver, flowed in waves about his massive brow, which betokened intellect of no ordinary stamp, while the cast of his face indicated a nature in which the fiercer passions predominated.

"The gods are propitious," murmured his wife, with a soft sigh of relief; and feeling that she might now venture, she raised the phial, which she had clutched nervously the while, and dropped the fatal liquid.

The effect was immediate. The victim's breathing grew shorter and shorter, then came a spasmodic contraction of the features and a rigid stillness settled upon him.

"Dead, dead, thank the gods," she exclaimed in a suppressed tone, "now I am free!" And she gazed for awhile with a look of grim satisfaction, after which she moved softly from the room and passing rapidly down a long gallery stopped abruptly near its terminus.

"Aha," she murmured, "voices within, and the girl should have been asleep long since. I'll soon solve the mystery of this midnight visitor."

Beside her was a pedestal on which a statue had once stood, and raising herself upon it she looked through the colored glass, graven with mystic symbols, that was inserted above the door of the small room beyond. It was a boudoir with draperies of white lace and blue damask, and in it was gathered every luxury that a refined taste could suggest.

On a divan was seated a maiden of faultless beauty. Her golden hair flowed in ringlets over shoulders of alabaster fairness, and her large eyes, which were of a deep blue, were fixed on the youth beside her with a look of tearful sadness.

Her companion who wore the undress uniform of the United States navy, was of a small but athletic frame, and as he bent toward her with his glossy brown locks sweeping back from his broad forehead, beneath which beamed a pair of brilliant brown eyes, whose proud, clear glance was now softened to almost womanly tenderness, he presented a striking and pleasing contrast to her purely feminine cast of beauty.

"Alvar," said the maiden, in tones as soft and clear as rippling waters, "I would do as you wish, and disclose our engagement to Mrs. Montalbert, but in spite of her professions, I feel that she is far from being my friend, though proof I have none. Yet who but herself could have given the impression which I know has become general, that I am high-tempered and eccentric? What may be her motive I cannot define, but there is something that warns me of her true character and bids me to beware of her. Alas, Alvar, I shall be miserable when you are gone, for I have none else to love me in this wide, wide world. And I fear lest we should never meet again," she added, her tears flowing fast.

In spite of the maiden's subdued tones not a word escaped the listener without, who stood with her head bowed toward a small aperture formed by a break in the glass, while her cheek burned with rage.

"Aha," she thought, "there is a sweet revenge in store for me, my fair maid. From the fate I have in reserve for you there is no escape, none. And you, my brave sir, ay, dry her tears with your soothing words and caresses, be happy in the present as you say, for the future will bring a shadow, a death-shadow across your path."

She listened for awhile longer. Long enough to learn that the youth, Alvar Lavalette, had received orders for the African coast, that he was to leave on the morrow to join his ship in Boston, and that on his return they were to be wedded. Then bethinking of herself she hastened from the house into the grounds reaching after a long circuit, a grove of live-oaks that bordered on the Mississippi River. There was only the dim light of the stars, and except the flow of the mighty waters, all was hushed. She groped her way from tree to tree, pausing at last by the patriarch of the wood, a huge oak with its hollow trunk thickly grown over with moss.

"He should have been here, it is past the hour," she murmured; "but no, I forget, I was

to give the signal." And drawing a small golden tube from her belt she sounded notes soft and clear as a nightingale. A few moments passed.

"He does not come, what can be the reason!" she muttered impatiently, and again she sounded those notes. But still there was no answer, and not till they had been twice more repeated did her quick ear detect a cautious tread rapidly approaching.

The next moment a tall form stood beside her, and his strong arms encircled her, as her companion pressed his lips again and again to her cheek. She returned his caresses, murmuring:

"Why so late, dearest? I had begun to fear lest some mishap had befallen you."

"I should have been punctual," was the reply, "for I left New Orleans at the time proposed, but I missed the way in this murky starlight, and thus increased a ten miles' drive to I know not what length. But how is it with him?"

"He sleeps. Come to the crimson chamber and you shall see how soundly;" and the two moved on with hushed breathing and stealthy tread.

"You are sure we shall not be observed, Isadore?" said her companion as they paused at the side door of the building.

"Yes," was her whispered reply, "follow me, you have nothing to fear;" and she led the way through a series of narrow passages, peculiar to that gloomy old mansion, till at last they stood within the crimson chamber.

The eyes of Isadore Montalbert glittered with a tiger-like ferocity as her lover gazed on those rigid features and placed his hand above the pulseless heart.

"You perceive my work is thoroughly done, he is dead," she said softly. And with a look that told more than ever how true a villain he was, Edmund Redimer returned her glance.

"It is well done," he replied; "there is no life there. And now that this obstacle is removed I hope in three months at most, to call you wife. This can be safely ventured, for Hugh Montalbert was so morose and stern toward others that you found it easy to give the false impression that he was so with yourself. His sudden death will be considered providential, and remarks I have heard in all quarters convince me that congratulations rather than blame would follow your speedy union with one so highly esteemed as myself;" and a smile flitted across his bold, handsome face.

"Inclination prompts me to yield, but prudence bids me beware," responded his companion. "I dare not thus hasten events! A year hence I will become your bride."

"This is needless caution, Isadore. For six

months I have been waiting, when he," and he pointed to the dead man, "might have been disposed of as safely the first week. I see no need for this long delay."

"Do not urge me," was the reply, "my determination cannot be shaken. My motto, as you well know, is 'make haste slowly.'"

Edmund Redimer was annoyed and angry to the last degree at this declaration, but he knew Isadore Montalbert too well to press the matter further, and fixed his gaze again upon the dead man in a vain effort to conceal his vexation, which, unconsciously to himself, had already flashed in his eyes, causing his companion's heart to throb with pleasure at the power she exercised over him as she added:

"There is another reason, dearest, for this delay. I would bring you a richer dower than ever bride in this country has brought her husband; and to accomplish this the girl, Evangeline De Vere, remains to be disposed of. This, you perceive, is the work of time. Her death must not follow his too quickly. Ha, ha! I discovered to-night that she also has a secret lover," and she told what she had overheard.

It was with a glance of the keenest scrutiny that Edmund Redimer replied:

"You talk, Isadore, as if money were the sole motive that prompted my wooing; but you well know that it is love, such a love as is experienced but once by men of my stamp, and which lasts a lifetime. Strong as my passion was for the luxury that gold alone obtains, I sought you long ago when another alliance would have given me a princely fortune. Then followed ten years of exile on your account, till at last, overruled by this master passion, I came again, determined to win you as mine, in spite of all obstacles."

"Let it suffice then," interrupted Isadore Montalbert, "that you have succeeded as you never would have done but for my faith in your love. And of my return of it you can no longer doubt, for though I once rejected you for his gold," and she pointed to the lifeless form before them. "I have now sacrificed him to you."

Edmund Redimer's face shone with the repleteness of his satisfaction, and, clasping hands, the two went on to discuss their plans, unconscious that the panel had been drawn from within a circle of carved leaves that lay in the deep shadow of the cornice directly above them, and that a pair of eyes had been glaring down upon them from the moment of their entrance, and a pair of ears drinking in each murmured word. And shortly after the door had closed on their retreating steps, the entire panel was noiseless.

ly removed, and a slight form, bounding lightly to the floor, stole to the dead man's side.

It was a female small in stature and of singular appearance. Her gray hair was parted smoothly from her broad, full forehead, and glistened like burnished silver; and the face which bore traces of great loveliness, was stamped with the lines of intense suffering. She was clad in black garments whose sombre hue was relieved by a single star-shaped jewel burning on her breast.

"It is true. He is indeed dead, dead," she murmured brokenly, as she bent over him and placed her hand above the still pulse; "ah, Hugh Montalbert! vengeance has overtaken you at last, and through her whom you loved so madly. And she, too, she too must suffer for her misdeeds," she added with sudden vehemence; "I still bide my time."

Her voice shook with the violence of her emotion, and her voice trembled yet more, as, clutching at the jewel on her breast, she continued:

"This, this was the symbol of our love. Thus you said when you gave it me. But yours was like the meteor's flash, while, in spite of all, I could never learn to hate you."

She paused for some moments, and then raising her slight, graceful form, she whispered:

"Hugh, farewell. I go on my mission;" and moving away, she passed up the narrow steps in the wall by which she had descended. Then the panel glided to its place and there was a deep hush of death in the crimson chamber.

Two days later a stately funeral procession wound its way from the Montalbert mansion. The rich coffin, of ebony inlaid with silver, was distinctly visible through the glass sides of the plumed hearse, and beside the wreath placed upon it by the hand of Isadore Montalbert, was another of rarer flowers. Whose was the offering none knew, but one was among them, unobserved, clothed in a suit of simple gray, who had laid it there—that one was she of the silver tresses.

It was again night. The clock in the old tower had struck the hour of three, in slow, solemn tones, and still Isadore Montalbert paced to and fro in the crimson chamber.

"I hate the girl," she finally exclaimed, pausing in her walk; "ay, with a hatred so intense that did I not covet her fortune, nothing short of her life would satisfy me. More beautiful than myself, forsooth! I heard them say so at his funeral, and it has rankled in my breast ever since. But I will be revenged on her. Yes, I could see Evangeline De Vere expire by slow tortures, and I will. I will touch her in the tenderest point, her love. It is mental suffering

that causes most anguish in an organization such as hers. Ha, she little dreams that I have her secret. But I must be doubly wary now that I have resolved to hasten events," she added in a milder tone, and, resuming her walk, she continued to ponder on her fell purpose.

The contemplated crime was, if possible, darker than that already committed. Five years before, her friend Mrs. De Vere had, on her death-bed, entrusted her only child, Evangeline, then but twelve years old, to Isadore Montalbert's care. And such was her confidence that she would be as a mother to the orphan girl, that she had in her will bequeathed to Mrs. Montalbert, in case she should outlive Evangeline and the latter have remained unmarried, the large property which she would inherit from herself.

Hence her unbounded rage when Isadore Montalbert discovered Evangeline's secret betrothal, for she felt that it might have resulted in a private marriage and thus have placed the coveted fortune forever beyond her reach.

It was not long before Isadore Montalbert again gave expression to her thoughts:

"I have decided," she exclaimed; "that old fortune-teller is just the person for my purpose. A few days since, when she predicted the brilliant future strangely enough, exactly what I had planned for myself, she let fall certain expressions that marked her as the tool I need. My spare gold would buy a host of such as she. I will go to her at once, and when I have done with her, this"—and she drew forth the golden phial that she now wore constantly about her—"shall put a seal on her lips."

Shortly after, Isadore Montalbert entered the fortune teller's rude cabin, which stood just within a thicket of gigantic shrubs and interlacing vines, not far from the bounds of her own estate. The dawn had just broke, and the woman was eating a simple breakfast of bread and fruit. She was a most repulsive figure. A brown scarf, faded and otherwise discolored, was wound about her head, and a dress of the same hue, patched and tattered, fell loosely to her heavily shod feet. Her sallow, snuff-beameared face lighted up on beholding her visitor, and she extended a hand, which, soiled as it was, the elegant and fastidious Isadore Montalbert dared not refuse.

The latter was approaching with extreme caution the subject that had brought her there at so unusual an hour, when the woman suddenly confronted her with a look that dispelled whatever of doubt might yet remain, as she exclaimed:

"You have a plot ahead, and want my services. Well, I am ready—for generous pay, mind you, and prompt—to do all you wish. Shouldn't



care if my palm was crossed with gold even before the work began. And I am not particular as to the means you choose. Poison or the knife are alike to me—I never fail in what I undertake.”

This brought the matter to a point at once, and when the sun had fairly risen, all was arranged, and the cabin's weird-looking occupant stood gazing with a look of intense satisfaction at the heavy gold pieces glittering in her hand and at the retreating form of Isadore Montalbert.

An air of dreamy indifference had always marked Evangeline De Vere's manner toward the circle of associates selected for her by Mrs. Montalbert, for they were mere people of fashion, while Evangeline's mind was of a cast far above mediocrity in intellectual capacity, and keenly alive to poetic inspiration. Hence, the young girl had led a weary life till chance one day brought within her sphere a congenial soul in the person of Alvar Lavalette. Tempted by the beauty of the night, she had ventured alone on the river in a light skiff, confident that she could manage it, and was in a position of great danger when Alvar Lavalette, who was returning from a solitary boating excursion, came most opportunely to her assistance, saving her from almost certain death.

The youth's parents, who were advanced many years in life's decline, had long since withdrawn from fashionable gaieties, and as Alvar had no taste for them, the two would perhaps never have met, but for the occurrence just related, although his own stately home was within a few miles of the Montalberts'. But having met, well suited as they were to each other, the natural result followed, and when Isadore Montalbert learned their secret, they had been for two months betrothed.

This perfidious woman had been long revolving in her mind a plan for the death of Evangeline, as well as of her own husband, and the impression she had given, and to which the young girl referred in her conversation with her lover—that she was high-tempered and eccentric—had, in connection with subsequent hints that she had let fall, fully prepared the minds of Isabel Montalbert's associates for the announcement that she was about to make—that Evangeline De Vere had become a maniac!

Shortly after her return from the fortune-teller's, Isadore Montalbert sought Evangeline, and in grief-stricken tones proposed going for a time to a plantation of her deceased husband's some twenty miles distant.

“My presence there is necessary for awhile,” she added, “and besides, it will be a change of scene for us both. It is so sad—so sad here!” And she wept.

Evangeline gave a ready assent, for she was

glad to escape from the gloom of a house which in its unwonted quiet seemed to her excited imagination to be constantly haunted by the shade of him who had so recently been its master—the stern, morose man, whom she had so feared.

The necessary preparations were soon made, and at the close of an hour, they had started on their way. They had a rapid drive to the spot, and it was with a feeling of relief that Evangeline leaned forth to gaze on the beauties of the scene and inhale the fragrance from the magnolias that shaded the broad avenue along which they were passing, and which terminated at the chief entrance of the mansion, a many-gabled cottage embowered in flowering vines and shrubs. After they had partaken of the choice repast that had been awaiting them, Isadore Montalbert proposed that Evangeline should retire to her apartments, whither she proposed conducting her.

“We both need rest,” said she, as she moved on, “and I hope you will find yourself comfortable here. These are your rooms.”

And she threw open a door revealing a suite of apartments hung with delicate green draperies, and furnished in a style of airy elegance. Evangeline expressed her satisfaction.

“This is truly a lovely place,” said she, stopping at an open window, “and I hope ours will not be a short stay.”

“You shall remain as long as you wish,” was the reply. And a strange smile that perplexed Evangeline passed over her companion's face.

“Here,” she added, “is another room which I have fitted even more with a view to your taste than these. How does it suit?”

There was a heavy curtain drawn over the entrance, and on Evangeline's approaching, she was thrust rudely in, and the door was closed and locked with much violence. The young girl stood aghast. She was in a large room, with scanty furniture and bare walls, and from the ceiling hung an iron lamp, whose dim, lurid light gave a deeper gloom to the shadows that thickened as they settled over the more distant portions.

“What does this mean—what does this mean?” she exclaimed, at last. “O, Thou who art the orphan's God, protect me in this evil hour.”

A hiss, low and prolonged, fell on her ear as she uttered these words, and she trembled yet more on beholding through a grated aperture the face of Isadore Montalbert, whose swollen and distorted features were clearly revealed by the strong light of the lamp she bore.

“Aha!” she exclaimed, “I am glad you are so well pleased! This is but the beginning of your delights, however. I have been a listener to the softly-spoken phrases poured into your

lover's fond ears, and shall take due care that some of them, your forebodings, be fully realized. You have, in truth, seen Alvar Lavalette for the last time, for ere long you will be borne from here to your grave. Remember, to your grave, for I hate, ay, hate you!"

And as that hiss again burst through her clenched teeth, her helpless victim gave a heart-broken sob, and fell senseless to the floor. For a moment, Isadore Montalbert gazed. Then, with a demoniacal expression of joy bursting from her empurpled lips, she turned away, and went to join her lover, who was awaiting her in a lower room.

They embraced—and then in the gleeful tones of remorseless crime, pictured and rejoiced over their successful guilt, both of the past and present, deciding that Evangeline's life should be spared but a few weeks at the utmost.

"And shortly after her demise," continued Isadore Montalbert, "we will marry, Edmund, for I have decided that we can do so safely. My health has already been seriously affected—the world believes—by the sudden loss of my husband, whom they think I loved in spite of his harshness. Ha, ha! there never was a kinder person, though I think his love for me expired long ago. But, as I was about to say, this second shock following so quickly will render it necessary that I should travel, and such an invalid as I will require a protector, which will be a sufficient apology for our speedy union."

Edmund Redimer was expressing his satisfaction in the strongest terms, when the fortune-teller made her appearance. Her aspect was a little less repulsive than usual, for her toilet had been made with a strict regard to cleanliness.

"Well, Brigita, how fares it with the maiden?" said her new mistress, in a sarcastic tone.

"She has recovered from her swoon, and is prepared for what is to follow, better, far better than yourself, my fair lady."

These last words were uttered in an impressive tone, whose sweetness contrasted strangely with her habitually rough voice, and at the same time her disguise was thrown aside, and she of the silver tresses stood before the guilty pair. Fixing her eyes upon them, with a look that made them quail, she continued, addressing Isadore Montalbert:

"I perceive you do not know me, and it is not strange. Years, and suffering, and death—for assuredly to you mine will prove a resurrection—might well hide all remembrance of one, who—"

She was here interrupted by Isadore Montalbert, who had in an aside, directed her lover to secure all means of egress from the room, while

she proceeded to engross the woman's attention.

"You are a vile impostor," she exclaimed, "and I assure you you have mistaken your game. Ay, look at me, study me well, and learn that you better had ventured into the lion's den, than thus confronted Isadore Montalbert. But go on," she added, perceiving the outlets were now secured, "I can well afford to listen, for you are in my power. Others here are the tried minions of my will, and before dawn you shall be the occupant of a grave on which the sunbeams will never rest, for know that this house has its dungeons, too."

"If you will listen, it is all I ask. Life to me has long since lost its value," was the quiet reply. "Isadore Montalbert," she continued, with sudden vehemence, "I denounce you as one whose soul is blackened by the foulest crime. Long years ago you plotted with Hugh Montalbert to take the life of his wife, in order that you might fill her place by his side. Ah, I perceive you remember it well. You sat in the room then used as a library, now known as the crimson chamber, and his arms encircled you, while you discussed with him your cruel purpose. And I, his wife, listened with curdling blood—for I had fallen asleep on a pile of cushions in an alcove close by, and awoke in time to hear the whole. Ah, it was tongues of flame eating into my agonized heart, and at last, feeling that if I remained longer I should betray my presence, I arose, and favored by the thickening night shadows, crept from the room. Then came a sudden resolve.

"'It shall be as they wish,' I cried; 'they shall believe me dead, and she whom I raised from the sudden poverty to which her orphanage had reduced her—the viper whom I have cherished in luxury far surpassing her previous condition, shall fill my place, since he wishes it—he, whom in spite of all I cannot hate.'

"And I went forth bearing some garments I had hastily gathered, which, on reaching the river, I threw in. The moon was shining brightly, and I saw them distinctly, as they floated down till they lodged among some rushes. Then I went on, moving over a marshy waste, till just as morning broke, I reached a deserted hut, standing among some leafless trees, about which was waving a drapery of gray moss.

"'This,' I cried, 'shall be my home. Here will I wait till Heaven shall avenge my wrongs.' And I did so, subsisting meanwhile on the fruits of my own humble toil, while you, in splendid ease and fancied security, believed me lying beneath the dark waters of the Mississippi. At intervals I came to observe unseen the working of the curse, for I felt that one had been pronounced

against you. And I was right. A cloud brooded over you both, growing heavier and blacker as the years rolled on, till finally my husband died. And how I learned the manner of his death," she continued, in tones that made the guilty pair tremble in spite of themselves, "I will now explain.

"One day I had come on my accustomed errand, when I observed, as I stood in the shadow of a remote and deserted wing of the building, that a portion of the ornamental woodwork had decayed, leaving a metal ring inserted in the wall, and corroded with age. At once I recalled the tradition that the builder of this house, one of the Montalbert ancestry, had caused certain secret passages to be constructed, and their entrances marked by a ring of metal. But their existence had long been doubted, the strictest search for them having failed. I drew near to examine, and on pressing the ring, a portion of the wall fell inwards, revealing a narrow passage of the firmest masonry. 'I have discovered this for some purpose,' I exclaimed. And re-closing the door, for such it was, I resolved to explore the passage on that night, when all was quiet.

"And in the deep stillness of rayless gloom, I entered, and lighting a torch, moved on till I reached its terminus. There I found two other rings. By pressing one, an entire panel in the crimson chamber moved noiselessly aside; this I closed at once, and pressing the other, stood gazing through a small aperture that appeared high up in the same panel.

"He was lying on a gorgeous couch, apparently in a deep slumber. But ere long you and your accomplice stole in, and with intensest horror I gazed and listened to the demoniacal scene that followed, till it closed by the plotting of yet another murder. But from that time the maiden was safe. For there have been watchful eyes upon you, and hands ready at all times to defend the innocent girl whom you thought so completely in your power. And now, Isadore Montalbert, your hour of doom has come. You are about to pay the penalty of your fearful crimes."

There was a pause while the three gazed at each other, and then the guilty woman arose, confronting her accuser with foaming lips and a livid brow.

"Woman," she exclaimed, "it is your own hour of doom that has arrived. You are in my power. Every word you have uttered is as false as your own black heart, and shall be proved so if you have dared to breathe such a tale abroad. You little knew with whom you had to deal, when you spread this net for me, and will find yourself caught in your own toils. Aha!

yours shall be a most bitter end—a most bitter end!" And the enraged woman brandished her clenched hand, and ground her teeth in the agony of detected guilt. But the other stood calmly, as she replied:

"I knew your crafty nature, and therefore delayed my accusation, for I was conscious the course I had pursued would give you the advantage. And this delay has rendered your conviction sure, for these witnesses will not only prove my identity, but also that out of your own mouth has your condemnation come, for not a word you have uttered this night has escaped them." And she pointed towards the door of a closet near, from which there now issued several persons, who immediately surrounded the guilty pair, three of them, who were officers of justice, proceeding at once to secure their prisoners.

Edmund Redimer made a vigorous resistance, while his companion stood for a moment pale and rigid. Then she gave a cry that sent a chill of horror through the stoutest heart there, as drawing forth the golden phial, she exclaimed, while her burning glance fell on her accuser:

"I defy you and them. You think to make me die a felon's death, but this shall cheat you of your prey." And pouring its contents upon her head, she fell a moment after, lifeless to the floor.

A wild confusion followed, in the midst of which Edmund Redimer effected his escape, and was never after heard from in that region. The following day a solitary grave was dug in the deep shadow of a cypress wood, and thither they bore the remains of Isadore Montalbert. A prayer for the soul of the departed rose to the lips of Evangeline De Vere, on beholding the hearse, as it moved slowly away without a single mourner in its track, and she turned shuddering from the melancholy sight, to find herself enfolded in a pair of fond arms, and a gentle voice addressing her. It was Alvar Lavalette, whose sudden appearance was soon explained.

On reaching his destination, he had received a document containing his promotion to a lieutenancy, a vacancy having occurred, and giving him a leave of indefinite length. He returned immediately home, and on learning whither Evangeline had gone, followed on with the intention of persuading her to acknowledge their betrothal and become at once his bride. And he now pressed his suit with redoubled ardor.

"It is not fitting, after what has passed, that you should remain here, or return to your former residence," said he to Evangeline; "become my wife then, at once, and let us go to-day to our home."

The young girl hesitated, but his persuasions overruled her at last, and that night the lovely bride received a warm welcome from her newly made parents to the sphere in which she was henceforth to move.

Rosalie Montalbert went "to live for a time," she said, in the old Montalbert mansion, ere seeking a pleasanter spot wherein to close her life. But one day Evangeline—now more beautiful than ever, because happiness had set its seal on her fair face—received a summons from her friend

She found Rosalie Montalbert in the crimson chamber, seated before a writing-desk, a secret drawer of which lay open, and in her hand was a written paper, which she handed to Evangeline, while a bright smile illumined her face.

"Read," said she; "this star after all has not been a false symbol." And she pressed her hand to the jewel that had ever glittered on her breast.

Evangeline read. It was a confession of Hugh Montalbert in an hour of bitter remorse, and dated the day previous to his death. In it he acknowledged his intended crime, and appealed to her whom he had long supposed an inhabitant of the unseen world for forgiveness. And in closing, he confessed his love for Rosalie had been overshadowed only, not supplanted, by a passion that had made his life an arid waste.

The young wife turned to express her sympathy in the happiness that this discovery must have given her to whom she owed so much. But though the smile still rested on those grief-worn features, the lips gave no reply, for Rosalie Montalbert was dead.
